

EDITORIALS

Tale of Two Leaks

It is enlightening to compare two recent cases of violation of security-confidentiality-secrecy and what is being done about them. One is the case of Daniel Schorr, the CBS News correspondent who found a copy of the widely discussed Pike Committee report on intelligence burning a hole in his pocket and decided that the public should have a look at its actual words even though the House had voted, under administration pressure, to bury it. The other is the case of Secretary of State Kissinger whose apparatus made available, to a writer for *Foreign Policy*, documents on his 1975 negotiations leading to the disengagement between Israel, Egypt and Syria—which, in the words of columnist Mary McGrory, “served to reveal him as the greatest negotiator since Moses bargained with God.”

In the case of Schorr, the House Committee on Standards of Official Conduct has sprung from a mere bud into a budget of \$350,000, with a staff of forty-three and a projected 1,100 hours of investigative time. (Since some 2,000 copies of the Pike report were printed, and assuming only one reader per copy, a rough calculation would give a half-hour per “suspect” for the ethics committee probes.) But Kissinger, who quite clearly authorized the whole leak, has managed to plumb the depths of his colleagues’ indiscretion, which he called “gross,” in a mere three days and already the two sub-leakers have had their “reprimands.” It is reasonable to think that these showy slaps on the wrist will not leave deep scars.

Since Kissinger has been the loudest and most persistent complainer against the alleged indiscretions of Congress, which he claims make the conduct of international affairs impossible, the *Foreign Policy* article, with its quotations from Kissinger’s conversations with Arab and Israeli leaders, should be deeply embarrassing to the Secretary of State. They would also seem to do much more harm to the proper conduct of this country’s foreign policy than any amount of revelations on the ineptitude and eventual criminality of the American intelligence apparatus.

If shuttle diplomacy produces as its main by-product a flattering portrait of the American shuttler’s brilliance, at the expense of all confidentiality for his interlocutors, what foreign leader will be eager to expose himself (or herself, since Golda Meir is extensively quoted) to this experience the next time around? Kissinger, in his closing days as this country’s first diplomat, is obviously prepared to take that risk. His motive can only be, apart from simple vanity, the burnishing of his own image as the indispensable man of American foreign policy. It is a dangerous game that he plays. He will not salvage the policy of “détente,” which the President has at least verbally cast adrift during this political season, by such discreditable tactics.

As for Daniel Schorr, the object of all the House of Representatives’ wrath, he awaits the fall of a two-edged ax. The ethics committee is sharpening one side, trying to figure a way around the protections of the First Amendment. And the craven businessmen who own the CBS radio affiliates are honing the other blade in the interest

of preserving their “license to print money” (as a broadcast license has accurately been described). The CBS affiliates have counseled CBS News to consider firing Schorr.

All sorts of double standards are at work here. It is all right for a Secretary of State to have revealed his brilliant manipulation of foreign statesmen in a ticklish diplomatic situation (and then to put on a show of blaming subordinates, entirely dependent on him, when his indiscretions are criticized). It is all wrong for a reporter who happens to possess a document which Congress, under executive branch pressure, has weakly decided to suppress after its substance has been widely reported, to make the text itself known to the American public.

It’s a tale of one city—but of two dubious standards of morality.